



# Governor's Rural Life Task Force

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## Update for Members of the Task Force

### Pilot Project for Communities

Information has been released to the media, organizations and communities about the application process for the community pilot project developed over the last few months by a subteam of the task force. Thanks to those folks: Bob Cole, Gary Gore, Dave Govert, Joe King, Sharla Krenzel, Mike Mayberry, Dan Nagengast, Marci Penner, Tim Peterson, Debbie Richter and Dan Thalmann, who volunteered to develop forms and criteria for this program.

The Rural Life Task Force is seeking two communities to engage in a two-year process with the task force and governor to solve problems common to rural communities and to build a sustainable future. A community can be a town, an alliance of rural communities, or a consortium of niche businesses, like small-town grocery stores, as long as the outcome of the project could benefit many communities. The projects will be considered a success if they help maintain the viability of the communities and serve as a template for other communities. The first application deadline is July 15. The application document and project explanation are available online at [http://www.ksgovernor.org/workgroups\\_rltf.html](http://www.ksgovernor.org/workgroups_rltf.html).

### Rule and Regulation Subteam

One of the original action points for the RLTF agriculture team was to review rules and regulations regarding direct-marketed and value-added agricultural commodities, with an eye toward increasing efforts in that area. A number of problems and concerns were identified at earlier meetings, and some action steps were established at a June 7 meeting. Action items agreed on include:

- Developing a proposal with KSU for a pilot demonstration project to provide state meat and poultry slaughter inspection in a mobile facility.
- Updating KSU's Food Processors' Manual.
- Developing, and presenting at six locations across the state next January, a direct marketers' seminar

cosponsored by the Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas Department of Agriculture and KSU.

### **Communications Project Announced**

Communications is an issue in rural areas. The governor has announced a project that will enhance the ability of first responders to exchange critical information during both crisis and routine interactions. The project, which will be in a 17-county area of southeast Kansas, is the first step toward statewide deployment of an interoperable communications system.

First responders frequently can't talk directly with other emergency service agencies because their radio systems are not compatible. Upgrades to the communications system in southeast Kansas will enable the region's many first responders to directly communicate with one another. Counties included in the pilot are Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Coffey, Crawford, Elk, Franklin, Greenwood, Labette, Linn, Miami, Montgomery, Neosho, Wilson and Woodson.

Read more at [http://www.ksdot.org/offtransInfo/News05/ground\\_breaking.asp](http://www.ksdot.org/offtransInfo/News05/ground_breaking.asp).

### **New Prosperity Summits in Planning Stage**

Many members of the task force will be asked to participate in a 2005 Prosperity Summit process planned for this summer and fall. The Docking Institute of Public Affairs will help with data collection and facilitating meetings for regional focus groups that will discuss economic development priority issues and identify region-specific issues. The process will culminate with a statewide meeting where a comprehensive strategic plan will be released. The Kansas Department of Commerce is the lead on this project, with the Departments of Revenue, Health and Environment, Labor, Wildlife and Parks, Transportation and Agriculture helping with planning. The 2003 prosperity summits resulted in an effective state economic revitalization plan and critical legislative and state agency initiatives to realize the plan.

### **And Other Items of Interest**

The Kansas Department of Commerce continues to help individuals interested in starting successful agritourism ventures. A series of regional workshops was recently completed. Presentations by Jane Eckhart, a consultant hired for the purpose, focused on topics of practical interest to agritourism businesses.

S56, a bill to remove mandatory labeling requirements from 10 percent ethanol at the pump, passed and was signed by the governor. Effective July 1, labeling will be voluntary. Other states had E10 ethanol sales increase significantly, particularly in urban areas, after passing similar legislation.